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Narrator

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Interviewer

1977

Interview done for the Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota KMRS Feature



The transcription of this oral history was made possible in part by the people of Minnesota through a grant funded by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Any views, findings, opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society, or the Minnesota Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

LT: 00:01 This is Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a Saturday KMRS news feature. Today, we're talking with Ed Brandvold from Starbuck. And, Ed, were you born around the Starbuck area?

EB: 00:13 I was. Yes, I was, four miles out of town.

LT: 00:18 Okay. And what was it like living around Starbuck? The town has changed over the years a little bit, hasn't it?

EB: 00:24 It has changed quite a bit since my young days.

LT: 00:30 You came from a pretty big family and it was unique as there were a couple sets of twins.

EB: 00:35 Yeah, that's right. We're 13 in the family.

LT: 00:38 Well, it's a big family. And you were a twin, too?

EB: 00:40 Yes, I'm one of them.

LT: 00:42 Was that—did that make life a little bit more interesting being a twin?

EB: 00:46 I don't know. The only—my other brother only lived six months.

LT: 00:53 Okay. At a pretty young age, your family moved up to Canada. What year was that and how come they moved up to Canada?

EB: 01:00 1905. That's right, we all moved up there. We homesteaded up there.

LT: 01:05 Okay. Was the land better or cheaper, or how come you moved up to Canada?

EB: 01:08 Well, they've got \$10 to file in a homestead, and it's good land, too.

LT: 01:12 And how many acres did you get for that \$10?

EB: 01:16 Well, 160 acres.

LT: 01:21 Okay. You said the land was pretty good up there, but you had to work it first, didn't you?

EB: 01:26 Oh, you got to break it to turn it over and work it, and drag it and you let it work for you.

LT: 01:34 Okay. Now, in 1905 up in Canada, was it hard to get machinery moved around and that type of thing?

EB: 01:41 Oh, no, it wasn't, no. We shipped most of the machinery from here when we moved up there.

LT: 01:47 There were there railroads going through then?

EB: 01:49 Yes, so it was.

LT: 01:52 What was the land or the towns and communities around there? Was it much different than in Minnesota?

EB: 01:57 Pretty much the same, not much difference. Saskatoon was only a small town, about, oh, I'd say about a couple thousand maybe, and now it's 140,000, 150,000.

LT: 02:12 That's a town that sure has really grown then?

EB: 02:14 Yes, it has. That's for sure.

LT: 02:16 Well, then about 1914, you moved back to Starbuck. And tell us the reason for that.

EB: 02:22 Oh, I came back here and I got married in 1915 to a girl down here by the name of [Magda?] Camilla Thompson.

LT: 02:33 Okay. And then you stayed back in Starbuck here for how many years?

EB: 02:36 Well, I've been—since 1930. We moved back from Canada in 1930, and I've been here ever since.

LT: 02:44 Okay. You moved back the first time then you worked for the railroad, right?

EB: 02:48 I worked, yeah, about three years in Soo Line in Glenwood.

LT: 02:52 And what was your job?

EB: 02:54 Getting the engines ready, steamed up.

LT: 02:57 Now, how many trains used to come through here, a little bit more than the present?

EB: 03:01 Well, there's about 10, 12 trains every day.

LT: 03:06 Okay. Where were they headed out of Glenwood?

EB: 03:07 They went all directions, Minneapolis, Dakota, and up towards Thief River Falls, different places.

LT: 03:18 Glenwood was a pretty booming railroad town.

EB: 03:20 Oh, yes, it was. Real good.

LT: 03:22 Now, those steam engines, I've talked to people that have had steam engines on their farms for threshing and this type of thing, how much work was it getting a steam engine on the railroad fired up?

EB: 03:33 Oh, well, that's—it burned coal and the steam engine.

LT: 03:42 Okay. Then after about three years, then you moved then went back to Canada about 1918.

EB: 03:46 I went back then I started farming on my own in 1918, yes.

LT: 03:52 So you homesteaded yourself then?

EB: 03:54 Yes, I did.

LT: 03:55 So did you have to be a certain age to homestead?

EB: 03:58 You had to be 18 years old.

LT: 04:02 Okay. Did you get 140, 160 acres yourself then?

EB: 04:05 Yes, I farmed 160 acres, yes. And then my father had a homestead and another brother also had a homestead.

LT: 04:13 Now, you mentioned briefly about getting the land ready that first year. That must have been a lot of work.

EB: 04:19 It's hard. You got to break it you know, gang plowing, working down. I'd say you had a double disk, drag it down and get it pulverized and get the—

LT: 04:30 How many acres could you do in a day?

EB: 04:33 Oh, seeding. You could seed 20 acres a day with plowing, worth about six acres a day, yeah.

LT: 04:40 So it took quite a few days to get your land ready the first time.

EB: 04:46 Oh, yes, it would. It took quite a while, yes.

LT: 04:50 Well, then you decided I think about the 1930s to come back to Starbuck.

EB: 04:54 Yes, we came back here.

LT: 04:56 Okay. And—

EB: 04:56 We've been here ever since.

LT: 04:58 All right. Then you got into another business, a trucking business.

EB: 05:01 Yeah. Long distance trucking, about 28, 29 years.

LT: 05:06 Well, what kind of cargo did you haul?

EB: 05:09 All grain, corn, oats, lumber, fence posts and whatnot.

LT: 05:15 Okay. You took what, the grain from around this area and it went where?

EB: 05:18 Yeah. Up north, [inaudible 05:18]. And the northern part of the state like Parkers Prairie, Deer Creek, Detroit Lakes, Brainerd, and many other places.

LT: 05:31 Okay. Then the wood products from up there, you brought back here.

EB: 05:34 Yeah, I brought back fence posts and wood and whatnot.

LT: 05:38 These days, a lot of people are pretty interested in trucking, and I think that the truck drivers are the last of the American folk heroes. What were those trucks like back in the '30s when you were over the road trucking?

EB: 05:51 Well, they weren't—the first one I had was a 34 Ford, and it's a pretty good side truck. 1940, I had a tandem and a bigger motor and a bigger—a tandem.

LT: 06:04 The roads weren't quite as good as they are today.

EB: 06:06 Oh, no, they weren't then. No, that's true. I don't—

LT: 06:11 When did you get your first semi-truck?

EB: 06:14 Oh, the semi-truck, I got it in 1936.

LT: 06:23 Okay. When the introduction to semi-trucks, I suppose, as far as your load, you could really, what, almost double it?

EB: 06:29 Oh, not quite, but how big a load, a hundred more bushels of corn. You have to put the tandem on.

LT: 06:39 Okay. Now, today, some of the truck drivers are plagued with a few things like load limits and taxes and speed limits. Did truckers have any problems back then?

EB: 06:50 No, I didn't have no trouble, no. I wasn't traveling very fast, about 45 loaded, big rig.

LT: 06:59 How many years were you a trucker?

EB: 07:01 Oh, about 29 years.

LT: 07:04 And then during that time, how many miles you put on?

EB: 07:06 Over a million miles.

LT: 07:08 And you had a pretty safe record, too.

EB: 07:11 Yes, I had had a good record. Never hurt anybody or any accidents of any kind.

LT: 07:16 Drove over a million miles and no accident?

EB: 07:18 That's true.

LT: 07:21 Well, in about '58, '59 you retired and you still have a chance now to go back and forth to Canada. What, do you go about every year or so?

EB: 07:29 I have been going. Yeah, I made quite a few trips back there. Half a dozen trips since we moved back here. I have—

LT: 07:35 Do you have relations up there?

EB: 07:37 —brothers and sisters and nephews and niece and relations.

LT: 07:47 Well, you sound like you bounced back and forth quite a bit between Starbuck and Canada your life.

EB: 07:53 I sure did. Yeah, that's right.

LT: 07:56 Which area did you like the best of the two?

EB: 07:58 I liked Canada better than here.

LT: 08:01 But you like Starbuck?

EB: 08:03 Oh, yes, I do. Starbuck's a good town.

LT: 08:06 Well, Ed, there's one question I always end up with and that's when I ask your age. Ed, how old are you?

EB: 08:10 I'm 86, going in 87.

LT: 08:13 Thank you very much.

EB: 08:15 You're welcome.

LT: 08:15 We've been talking with Ed Brandvold of Starbuck on Reminiscing in West Central Minnesota, a Saturday KMRS news feature.